

Few Appreciate The Hardships Of Average Ranchman

By Monte Noelke

3-28-68

Page 9

MERTZON — The upper crust of the lion-and-pit society in ancient Rome didn't enjoy the privileges of modern women in the Shortgrass Country. The rights of these pampered prima donnas has grown to an extent that women suffrage groups meet only to chortle over their many victories. It's a wonder the ladies aren't bored to soap-opera size tears since they have nothing more to do than clean house, ferry a few kids back and forth to school, and whip off a stitch now and then on their sewing machines.

Weak-springed push buttons and easy flick switches command marvelous appliances to do most of the housework. Women's lives would be empty as a street cleaner's dream if it weren't for such trifling tasks as defrosting frost-free freezers, moping up after the peanut butter and jelly set, or whiling away the afternoons behind an easy-fold ironing board.

Given a basket of grapes as a prop, and a canopied boat to ride on the lakes, the modern Shortgrass female could make old Queen Cleopatra look like a scullery drudge.

The Shortgrass males are the ones who really catch it. If Abe Lincoln should come out of his grave and visit us, he could add 15 single-spaced verses to his Emancipation Proclamation speech without leaving the first male gathering. Even H. Rap Brown, the great repairman of all mankind's woes, couldn't stomach the miserable lives the women lead.

Our days go like this:

Every morning, the town ranchers go to the ranch. At about the same hour, the country-living ranchmen start to town.

Since we are so dependent on each other's company, the country boys have to stay around town until the city-based hombres get back from their outfits. Naturally, the driving and the waiting tires everyone out.

Most of the afternoons have to be reserved for playing dominos and discussing important business at the coffee houses. The mental gymnastics involved in shuffling the ivories, and the intrinsic values gained through rattling coffee cups are as much a necessity to the ranch business as whisk brooms are to the barber industry. The majority of the men would prefer being out at the ranch building fence than wearing themselves to a frazzle haggling over the double-six or bemoaning the daily drop in the price of our products.

Outsiders have an awful time understanding our schedule. It takes a full fledged, down-at-the-heel rancher to comprehend the sacrifices involved in running a modern livestock operation.

Non-ranchers ought to try spending three or four hours astraddle a cane bottom chair in a drafty domino parlor. And if our critics had to balance on squeaky stools in dingy cafes for hours on end just to keep up with the markets, they'd think twice before making further accusations. One day of following us around would be enough to make a city fellow mighty appreciative of his world of computers and padded office chairs.

Most of my compadres, however, face their dreary existence stoically, never complaining, always covering up the pains of their daily grind.

As for the women, the easier their lives become, the less they understand how hard their mates slave for a living.

For instance, even as I finished this article, my spouse came tearing in the front door demanding to know when I was going to haul off this year's Christmas tree.

Isn't that something? We work and struggle to make a living, and all the thanks we receive is an order to go haul off a dry sapling after a hard day's work.